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HOSPITAL AND TRAINING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

IN CHARGE OF

MARY M. RIDDLE, R.N.

LABORATORY TECHNIQUE FOR NURSES

BY ANNA I. GIBSON, R.N.

Many nurses unfortunately think that nursing consists in taking temperatures, counting pulses, giving baths and enemata, bringing trays and making beds.

A domestic servant could, without much trouble, be taught to do this mechanical side of nursing, and not many years ago this was all a doctor required of a nurse.

This is an age of specialization and doctors are working with a precision more careful than ever before, and they are asking for nurses who have a scientific knowledge of the care and treatment of patients.

The Huntington Hospital is a Research Hospital, and special study is made of leukemia, lymphoma, lympho-sarcoma and Hodgkin's disease. Cancer patients are received in all stages of the disease. The hospital has no training school and graduate nurses are employed. One does not realize what an enormous over production of uneducated and ill-trained nurses there are until she is dependent upon them for the nursing of the sick under her charge. The nursing of these cases is very depressing, and to those not familiar with cancer it is difficult to give an adequate idea of the distressing disabilities and physical and mental suffering. Dr. Thomas Ordway, the physician in charge, conceived the idea of giving graduate nurses the opportunity of learning laboratory technique and thus attracting the better educated nurses. As Dr. Ordway says, this work will lead a nurse to more careful observation of the patient, and also fit her for a position in a physician's office or in special instances for practical teaching in a training school. The course covers a period of six months with oral and written examinations at stated intervals. The instruction at the present time has the more personal idea of training the individual.

This opportunity of learning laboratory technique is offered to any nurse employed here as a ward nurse provided she is prepared to give adequate time and study to such work.

A nurse must become familiar with and accurately perform each single test before she is taught more complicated methods. At the present time one volunteer nurse is giving her services to the hospital in return for laboratory training.

Course of Instruction. First month: laboratory utensils, microscope, urinalysis. Second month: urinalysis, sputum, feces. Third month: vomitus, gastric contents, body fluids. Fourth month: bacteriology, blood. Fifth month: culture media, stains, re-agents. Sixth month: general review.

Stitt's *Bacteriology*, *Blood Work*, and *Animal Parasitology*, Hawk's *Physiological Chemistry*, Mallory and Wright's *Pathological Technique*, and Ogden's *Clinical Analysis of Urine* are used as text books, and an excellent reference library is open to nurses for more extended reading.

Clinical laboratory work is somewhat of a drudgery to the busy doctor, and the nurse who is capable of doing this work is a valuable assistant.

TOO LATE FOR CLASSIFICATION

A PROTEST

Dear Editor: As a graduate of the Waltham Training School for Nurses I should like to correct the erroneous impression that may have been gathered by some of your readers from one sentence in the editorial, "Progress of State Registration" in the May JOURNAL. This sentence is: "The graduates of the Waltham School were not formerly admitted to membership in the State Association and this ruling has only recently been changed, from the fact that the school has increased the period of training for its nurses to two years in the hospital instead of seventeen months, out of a four years' course." It is a year and a half, or more, since Waltham gave two full years (twenty-four months), of hospital work to its student nurses, and for some years before that it gave approximately that to each nurse, though it did not care to promise it to all. Some get much more. Never, unless in the earliest years of the school, has the amount of hospital work been nearly as small as seventeen months.

ANNETTE FISKE.